



## ***AOT in Action***

### ***TOURISM WORKS FOR ARIZONA!***

*Issue 128 – October 3, 2006*

Welcome to AOT in Action, your weekly e-newsletter from the Arizona Office of Tourism (AOT).

#### **A Message from the Director:**

Good morning.

AOT kicked off our new workshop series last week, presenting the “Economic Impact of the Travel Industry in Arizona” in Lake Havasu City. The first in a five workshop series that will visit every region of the state, the Lake Havasu City event was extremely well attended, as the tourism industry along Arizona’s West Coast received valuable information about tourism in their community. This is the first time AOT has ever been able to present county level data, and we are thrilled to bring this to communities around the state and show our constituents how to interpret and use this information in their daily activities. There is information below about the four remaining workshops, and I strongly encourage all of you to register for the workshop in your area. If everyone is educated about the incredible economic impact the travel industry generates in Arizona, we will all become ambassadors for this powerful industry, speaking with one unified voice.

Have a great week.

Margie A. Emmermann  
Director  
Arizona Office of Tourism

## AOT News Flash

### AOT Presents “Economic Impact of the Travel Industry in Arizona” Workshop Series

Please mark your calendars for AOT’s newest workshop series, featuring information from the first full-scale “Economic Impact of the Travel Industry in Arizona” report. The economic impact workshops will be held at five locations throughout the state, with each presentation being tailored to the counties that are near that location. The Economic Impact of the Travel Industry in Arizona report features county level travel data on each of Arizona’s 15 counties, which will give communities invaluable information on the amount of spending and number of jobs tied to the travel industry in their area. This type of data is vital for communities to explain the value of the travel industry to key stakeholders and secure funding for tourism programs. The workshops will focus on providing communities with methods for using the valuable information in the report to achieve their objectives. Please see below workshop schedule for which counties will be reported at which workshop. To register for a workshop please contact Sarah Martins at [smartins@azot.gov](mailto:smartins@azot.gov) or by phone at 602-364-3687.

October 18, 2006

10 a.m. – 12 p.m.

Best Western Payson Inn

801 North Beeline Highway 87

Payson, Arizona 85547

Counties to be covered: Yavapai, Gila, Graham and Greenlee

October 20, 2006

1 p.m. – 3p.m.

Little America

2515 East Butler Avenue

Flagstaff, AZ

Counties to be covered: Coconino, Navajo and Apache

November 1, 2006

10 a.m. – 12 p.m.

Hilton Tucson El Conquistador Golf and Tennis Resort

10000 North Oracle Road

Tucson, AZ 85737

Counties to be covered: Pima, Cochise and Santa Cruz

November 8, 2006

10 a.m. – 12 p.m.

Pointe Hilton Squaw Peak Resort

7677 North 16th Street

Phoenix AZ 85020

Counties to be covered: Maricopa and Pinal

## Industry News

### US Airways Pledges Support to Codeshare Partner United Airlines' Bid for Beijing Route

US Airways will submit testimony supporting codeshare partner United Airlines' application for nonstop service between Washington, D.C., and Beijing. The proposed capital-to-capital service will provide United and US Airways passengers with nonstop access between two of the world's most prominent capital cities. If approved by the U.S. Department of Transportation, the service will begin in March 2007. "United is certainly the flagship airline between the U.S. and China and we wholeheartedly support its application for service between our nation's capital and China's capital city," said US Airways Executive Vice President, Sales and Marketing, Scott Kirby. "With US Airways' large presence on the East Coast -- and especially in Washington D.C. -- this proposed route offers our customers access to an important political and economic region." US Airways will add its code to the proposed Washington Dulles -- Beijing flight as well as United's existing flights to China, which include daily service to Beijing/Peking and Shanghai from both Chicago and San Francisco. The codeshare will open China to US Airways' customers with convenient connection service through the airline's hubs in Charlotte, N.C., Philadelphia and Phoenix and secondary hubs in Las Vegas and Pittsburgh. "We know that our customers will benefit greatly from the added convenience of codeshare service to China on US Airways and United," continued Kirby. (*e-Turbo News 9/25/06*)

### New Marketing Planned to Boost Park Visits

Representatives from the travel and tourism industry told members of Congress last week they hope federal support for a new marketing strategy will help buoy the declining number of visitors to national parks. Visits to national parks across the country have declined nearly 4% since 1996, reflecting a trend nationwide. Only Alaska and the District of Columbia saw increases. "America's national parks are not only an important component of our nation's social fabric. They are often the driving force in the economies of many rural communities," said Bob Warren, manager of the Redding (Calif.) Convention and Visitors Bureau and general manager of the Shasta Cascade Wonderland Association. Warren and others have worked with the National Park Service since May, after Rep. Steve Pearce, R-N.M., chair of the House subcommittee on national parks, challenged them to develop ideas for pilot projects to increase park attendance. The group reconvened last week to present its suggestions to the subcommittee. Most of the plans involve improving communications, addressing marketing problems using modern technology and attracting international visitors. (*Anchorage Daily News.com/Money*)

### Business Airfares Soaring

Business air fares are soaring faster than any time since 2001, reports a study by American Express Business Travel. Business travelers paid more for flights during the second quarter of 2006 than anytime since 2001. The average airfare paid by business travelers jumped 13 percent to \$247 one way from \$218 in the same period of last year. Said Frank Schnur, vice president of consulting for American Express Business Travel: "More travelers in the air, combined with higher fuel prices and fewer available seats and hotel rooms, have led to considerable price increases -- a trend we expect to continue." (*Travelmole.com 9/26/06*)

## **Wikipedia Founder Launches City Guides**

Wikia has launched a new worldwide guide of places to go and things to do - World Wikia - open to contributions from all travelers. Bill Kaufmann, founder of World Wikia, says, "With World Wikia, we are looking to both residents and to people who have been there before to provide that ground's-eye-view of cities throughout the world." Partners contribute to free, travel-specific content and for the first time, multiple commercial publishers have agreed to open-source content to benefit the traveler community and let anyone edit the information. For example, SmarterTravel.com, offers a travel tool that provides those looking to earn free travel quick and easy access to a database of mileage and point-earning offers and opportunities. In addition, HostelsClub.com has contributed some of its best city guides to the project. (*Source: Internet Travel News*)

## **Grand Canyon Railway Sold to Colorado Firm**

Xanterra Parks & Resorts of Greenwood, Colo., signed a letter of intent to buy the 65-mile Grand Canyon Railway from owners Max and Thelma Biegert of Paradise Valley. When the Biegerts bought the railway in 1988 for about \$15 million, it had been closed for about 20 years. The railroad dates to the late 1800s, when it was started to haul copper ore from a mine north of Williams. It later was extended to the Grand Canyon when Santa Fe Railroad and the Fred Harvey Co. opened El Tovar Lodge in 1905. "We're hoping by October to have signed a formal sales agreement that will be much more extensive than the letter of intent," said Grand Canyon Railway President W. David Chambers. At that time, the sales agreement goes to the National Park Service for review. Xanterra President and Chief Executive Andrew N. Todd, in a prepared statement, said, "Our purchase of the Grand Canyon Railway is a logical progression as both companies are already in the business of helping to create unforgettable experiences for visitors to the Grand Canyon." The railway, its hotel, restaurant, gift shops and other facilities have nearly 500 employees. The railway's annual ridership is more than 225,000. (*Business Journal online – 9/21/06*)

## **Survey: Brands Preferred by Upscale Travelers**

Affluent travelers, those with household incomes in excess of \$150,000, represent a highly desirable target for many travel service marketers. Not surprisingly, their brand preferences vary significantly from those of their less-affluent counterparts, as revealed in the soon-to-be-released YPB&R 2006 Portrait of Affluent Travelers. Well-to-do travelers express a clear preference for certain lodging brands depending on the primary purpose of their trip: business versus leisure. According to the survey, the preferred brand for business travel is Hyatt, whereas Ritz-Carlton reigns as the preferred brand for leisure travel. Topping the list of individual and/or independently-owned resorts preferred by affluent travelers for leisure travel is The Phoenician in Scottsdale, Ariz. (*ModernAgent.com*)

## **Border Security Plan Delayed**

A plan to tighten U.S. borders by requiring passports or tamper-resistant identification cards from everyone entering the country by land from Mexico and Canada has been delayed. House and Senate lawmakers agreed to push back the program by 17 months, until June 2009, saying they wanted to make sure new ID cards being developed by the Bush administration will better secure borders against terrorist without slowing legitimate travelers from Canada and Mexico. The new IDs will be required for Americans and all others entering the U.S. The delay would

only apply to travelers entering the U.S. over land borders from Canada and Mexico. It would not affect rules for people coming into the country by plane or cruise ship, who will have to show their passports to Customs officials as of Jan. 8, 2007, to gain entry. The border plan was wrapped up in an overall \$34.8 billion spending plan for the Homeland Security Department. The House and Senate each aim to approve it later this week, before lawmakers recess for the elections. (AP; CNN.com; ModernAgent.com)

### **TIA Partners with YPB&R on Exciting New Study**

TIA is pleased to announce its partnership with Yesawich, Pepperdine, Brown & Russell (YPB&R) on a major new ongoing study - TravelHorizons™ - that will launch in early 2007. The study, which will be conducted six times a year, is designed to explore and track the effects of emerging economic, political, social and natural developments on the travel intentions of Americans. Data will be interpreted with reference to lifestyle, demography, media habits and travel behavior. An opportunity to add proprietary questions is also available. To learn more about this study, click [here](#). Or for additional information on TravelHorizons™, please contact Suzanne Cook at (202) 408-8422 or [scook@tia.org](mailto:scook@tia.org).

### **TIA to Release Wine and Culinary Tourism Study this Month**

"Seventeen percent of American leisure travelers (27.3 million) have participated in one or more culinary activities while traveling over the past three years", according to TIA's new Wine and Culinary Tourism Study. Learn more about wine and culinary tourists in this month's release of the study. Travel behaviors, preferences, and rankings of destinations are included in this comprehensive report of leisure travelers. Contact Valerie Hutchinson at 202-408-8422 to place your order for this report.

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